

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

CONFERENCE *connection*

Alabama • Georgia
Mississippi • South Carolina • Tennessee • NW Florida

SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

October 15, 2020

Lights, Elections, and Violence

Grace and peace! My husband and I did something new this week. We put up orange lights around our front door for Halloween! For us, lights are usually only a Christmas thing. Small decorative lights always bring me joy. Well, currently, I just felt the need for joy!

We are in the midst of cultural and political wars. Although people may experience times of exhilaration, there are also times of exhaustion. The closer we move toward the election, there is the growing concern about anger, intimidation, and violence realizing that the concerns will last beyond November 3. There are also growing feelings of distrust and frustration, while grieving the loss of more civil times. No matter what your political party affiliation or your stance on particular issues, we are all dealing with similar experiences.

Maybe we are not so different from other countries that struggle with identity and power. Even the stories and parables of Jesus remind us of other times in history when there was turmoil and violence. But into that uncertain world, Jesus was the light that showed a different way.

The weeks ahead may be difficult. I hope you will take particular notice of the new Zoom meeting below entitled "Election Fallout: How Should We Prepare?" on October 26. Through the weeks ahead, we are called to stay grounded in our faith that provides inner peace, while not ignoring injustice; a faith that can offer grace, while not backing down from the need



to protect and care for people.

My orange Halloween lights are small glows in the midst of the darkness that keeps growing. For me, they are a symbol of who we are called to be – light in the darkness. And that gives me great joy!

Blessings, Char

News from the Conference Office

From the Generosity Coordinator

This is a gentle reminder that the deadline for submitting your applications for a grant for the *Transforming Churches, Transforming Lives* award is October 21, 2020. These applications should be received by the close of our business day (5:00 pm Eastern).

We ask that you [visit our website](#) for guidelines so that we are able to better serve you. We realize that Covid-19 has totally changed our concept of “Church as Usual”, therefore we are aware that your needs have probably changed. We always suggest that you submit your applications as early as possible in case there are questions or concerns. As always, please feel free to reach out to me directly should you have questions or concerns. I am looking forward to working with all of you.



During this time of Pandemic, Covid-19, racial, and social unrest, we are still reminded of Psalm 46: 1-2, 4: “God is our Refuge and Strength, a very present and well-proved help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth should change and though the mountains be shaken into the midst of the seas. There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High.”

Please stay safe, stay blessed and continue to bless others as God has blessed you. Peace and blessing as we CONTINUE TO JOURNEY, TOGETHER!

Min. Carrole



Election Fallout: How Should We Prepare?

Monday, Oct. 26; 7 pm Eastern/6 pm Central

As we move closer to the elections, anxiety is growing. There is concern about violence and intimidation. Misinformation adds to uncertainty. No matter what the results of the elections, how do we respond as people of faith? How do we respond to individuals in our congregations who do not agree? How do we prepare for the array of emotions in the aftermath of the elections? Join us for conversation and sharing of resources that can help us prepare and navigate this challenging time ahead. [Register online here.](#)

Re-Opening of Churches – Conversation for all Church Leaders

Monday, October 19, 7 pm Eastern/6 pm Central

As things keep changing regarding COVID-19 and reopening churches, we want to continue the conversation, developing safe and best practices. There is also the question about what churches might maintain into the future. We invite all Moderators, Church Leaders, and Clergy to be part of the conversation. [Register online here.](#)

Clergy Zoom Connections for September

- **An Hour of Conversations and Prayer**
Tuesdays, October 20, 27 - 11:00 a.m. Eastern (10:00 a.m. Central)
Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/479440102>
 - **Especially for Specialized Ministers**
Tuesday, October 27 - 9:30 a.m. Eastern (8:30 a.m. Central)
Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/354744689>
 - **Live Harp Meditations for Ministers - NEW TIME!**
Thursday, October 22 - 12:00 p.m. Eastern (11:00 Central)
20 minutes of meditation with Celtic harp. Silent prayer and reflection following if desired, facilitated by Rev. Jean Norton. (For questions or to sign up for individual Therapeutic Harp Sessions, contact Jean at HeartSongJean@gmail.com.)
Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/96976838422>
 - **Maintaining Good Mental Health for Clergy**
Thursday, October 22 - 4 pm Eastern/3 pm Central
Rev. Sarah Lund, UCC Minister for Disabilities and Mental Health Justice will join us for a conversation about keeping focused and taking care of ourselves through these challenging times. [Register Online Here](#).
-

How can the Southeast Conference respond to the issue of racism?

We are seeking interested persons to form a team to suggest ways that the Conference can strengthen our witness to address issues of racism. Many of our local churches have engaged in conversations about racism and white privilege. Many individuals have participated in activities in support of and encouraging diversity and inclusion. But what about the entity that we call the Southeast Conference? You may have noticed that the national UCC Board recently [shared a document](#) seeking to do a national assessment of the UCC's diversity, equity, and inclusion. The UCC Conference Ministers recently wrote a letter in support of this assessment and committing themselves to be part of the reflection, [posted here on our website](#). So what about the Southeast Conference? If you are interested in being part of a new Team to explore the possibilities, please contact Char Burch, cburch@secucc.org.

Do You Have Bylaws Questions?

Periodically, questions are raised about church bylaws: someone notices that their bylaws don't provide the information needed or that they are too

limiting. UCC General Counsel, Heather Kimmel will join us for a discussion about Church Bylaws on November 9 at 7 pm Eastern/6 pm Central. However, in preparation for the discussion, she would like to know what questions you have. If you have questions, please email them to Char Burch, cburch@secucc.org.



Prayer List

We are continuing the process of praying for authorized ministers, congregations, and ministry groups throughout 2020. We encourage you to include these prayer requests in your local church newsletter, share them with your prayer circle, and include them in your own prayers.

Week of October 18

- Methodist Congregational Federated; Demorest, Georgia
- Soo Man Chang
- Artis Johnson
- Troy Sanders
- J Houston Wheeler
- Cindy Bovee-Kemper

Week of October 25

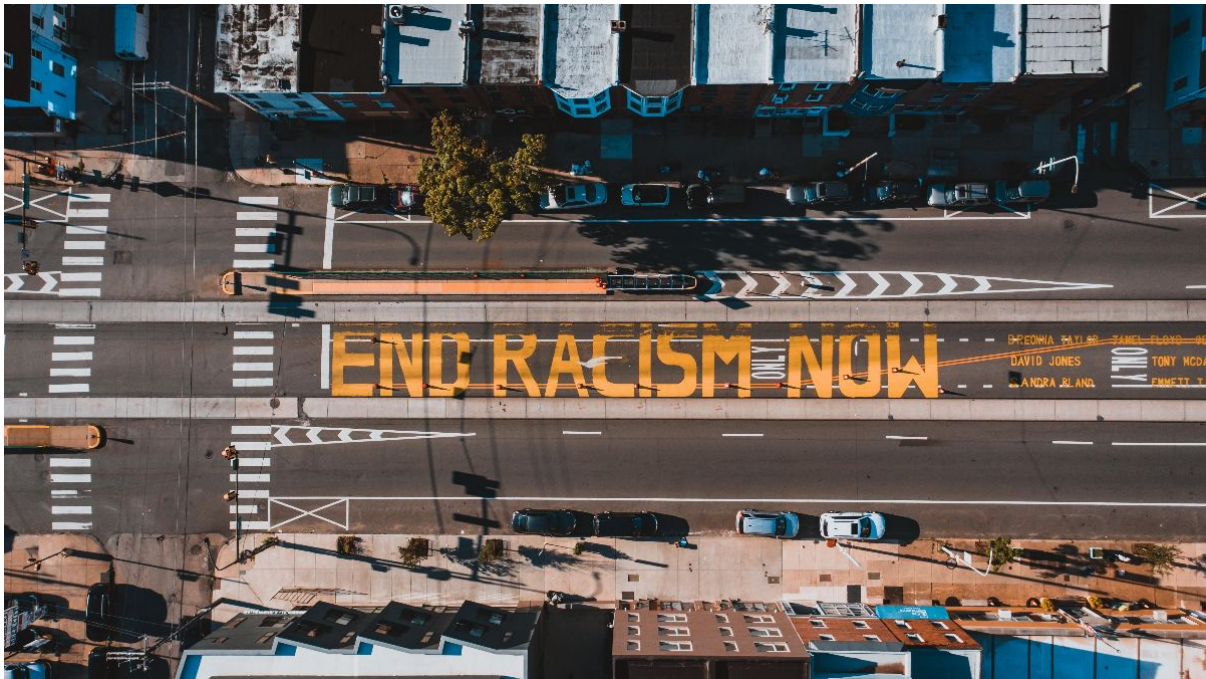
- First United Church UCC; Belvidere, Tennessee
- Sankofa UCC-Atlanta, Georgia
- Kwan Hae Chi
- Charmaine Penn Johnson
- Edward Schneider
- Ted Elsenheimer

- Larry L. Johnson

Churches in Transition

First Congregational, Savannah GA; Trinity Congregational, Athens AL; Open Table, Mobile AL; Rush Memorial, Atlanta GA; United Church of Cookeville, Cookeville TN; Pilgrim Congregational UCC, Chattanooga TN

News from the Wider Church



The Urgent Work of Racial Justice and Equity

In August the National Setting of the UCC committed to hire a consulting firm to lead them through “an objective racial equity assessment” to hold the national setting of the church accountable to the ideals the church has espoused regarding racial equality and inclusion. In this moment, the Council of Conference Ministers invites the congregations and members of our conferences to recognize and affirm our call to address racial justice and equity. [Read the entire letter on our website.](https://us17.campaign-archive.com/?u=01d4c5139f7be9d4d4ff4c63a&id=42247d1846)

Building a Workable and Effective Investment Policy

Every church and non-profit organization has its own unique mission and financial objectives. With that understanding, Matthew Wagner, Vice

President, Institutional Relationships at United Church Funds, has written a helpful guide that describes the building blocks for customized, workable, and effective investment policy. [Read it here on their website.](#)



New 3 Great Loves Resources Available for Free

During the 2020-2021 programmatic year, 3 Great Loves can be a valuable and easy-to-engage denominational initiative, even if your church hasn't actively participated since its inception in 2017. With this free resource guide, we re-introduce you to 3 Great Loves, outline its contours and framework, provide adaptable and customizable resources, and invite you to find your place and part in this denominational program of living out God's love.

From introductory letters, sermon suggestions, sample sermon, 3 Great Loves theme song, newly created 3 Great Loves worship liturgies, to children's coloring pages, and more, this resource is made for customization with ready to use materials. [Download it today!](#)

Also, [here is the link for the Stewardship Theme Materials for print and digital](#) and [here is a link to order free brochures](#). Finally, [here are the videos testimonials on YouTube](#) for churches to stream for each of the loves and a general call to love through our giving.

Grasping for Much Needed Grace

Members of the UCC Vermont Conference have created devotionals for the

20 days prior to the election, beginning October 15. Entitled "Grasping for Much Needed Grace: 20 Days of Nonpartisan Prayer" the style is similar to the UCC Still Speaking devotions. The prayers are on their website at vtcucc.org.

Trainings and Conferences



Healthy Boundaries 101 Available Online in October

NEW! We are able to offer HB101 ONLINE. Due to COVID-19, this is the only opportunity to receive this training before the end of 2020.

- **October 31, 2020**, 8:45 am-12:15 pm – Part 1
 - Boundary Basics
 - Power & Vulnerability
 - Dating, Friends, Dual Relationships, Gifts
- **November 7, 2020**, 8:45 am-12:15 pm – Part 2
 - The Pulpit, Transference, Hugging/Touch, Intimacy
 - Emerging Issues
 - Self-Care

Both sessions required

These workshops on two Saturday mornings by Zoom meet requirements for regular clergy boundaries training of the Christian Church in Georgia and the Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ.

[Register](#) **no later than October 22, 2020.**

- Registration fee is \$75 and includes materials.

- A smartphone, tablet, or computer with a camera is required.
- Materials will be mailed to you in advance.
- You will be contacted by email before the event with further information.
- More information at www.gadisciples.org/for-clergy – scroll to bottom of page.

Energizing the South for Energy Justice Summit

Thursday, October 22 11 am - 4 pm Eastern/10 am – 3 pm Central

Friday, October 23 9 am - 2 pm Eastern/ 8 am – 1 pm Central

Communities in the South are experiencing a very real threat of utility shutoffs and evictions. People are being left unprotected. The UCC has a history of being pioneers against environmental injustice. This is an environmental injustice! In addition, there are no alternatives because people are robbed of choice and resources. This is energy injustice. We are looking for faithful people throughout the Southeast Conference who will join us in building this movement for energy justice for our most vulnerable among us and to join us for two days of education and inspiration. We will learn of the injustices around energy while inspiring you to advocate for energy justice. Help us in alleviating economic oppression, inequity, and environmental justice by registering today for our Energizing the South for Energy Justice Summit. The Schedule and Speakers are listed on the Eventbrite registration page below.

There is no cost to attend. The first 20 authorized UCC ministers to register will receive a \$30 gift card to pay for lunch for the days of training. This is partly funded through a grant from the UCC Brown Endowment Fund for Clergy Continuing Education. Questions can be directed to Rev. Michael Malcom: revmalcom@thepeoplesjusticecouncil.org.

Register Here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/energizing-the-south-tickets-122101213015>



UCC Mental Health Network

Welcoming • Inclusive • Supportive • Engaged

WISE Training for Congregations

The UCC Mental Health Network, in partnership with the Indiana-Kentucky Conference, will sponsor a WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, Engaged) training for congregations that is open to churches throughout the UCC. The training will take place on November 13-14, The cost is \$25. Check the following for more information: bit.ly/IKCWISE

COVID-19 Reopening Considerations for Church Leadership and Clergy

Insurance Board has been at the forefront in providing resources to assist churches throughout COVID-19; we are committed to offering options for consideration that can help protect ministries and their congregants. As houses of worship consider gathering again, Insurance Board has produced a video addressing policy and liability concerns for church leadership and clergy, in partnership with legal experts and denominational leaders. There is also a companion video for staff and volunteers offering guidance on helping prevent the spread of COVID-19.

<https://www.insuranceboard.org/reopening-during-covid-19-consideration>.

Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders

The last session of *Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders* for this year will be November 16-20, 2020. This outstanding 5-day event helps participants deal more effectively with interpersonal, congregational, and other forms of group conflict. The tentative dates for next year are March 1-5, May 3-7, June 21-25, August 2-6, October 4-8, and November 15-19, 2021. No decision has yet been made with regard to returning to an in-person format, so attendees will need access to a device with both a camera and a microphone. Questions? Contact the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center at Admin@LMPeaceCenter.org or 630-627-0507. To receive a \$200 tuition discount for the November 2020 session, register no later than October 16. To register online for any of our events scheduled for this year, please visit <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/producer/720852>.

Conference Calendar

[Re-Opening of Churches – Conversation for all Church Leaders](#)

October 19 @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm EDT

[Clergy Conversations via Zoom](#)

October 20 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm EDT

[Energizing the South for Energy Justice Summit](#)

October 22 @ 11:00 am - 4:00 pm EDT

[Live Harp Meditations for Ministers](#)

October 22 @ 12:00 pm - 12:30 pm EDT

[Maintaining Good Mental Health for Clergy](#)

October 22 @ 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm EDT

[Energizing the South for Energy Justice Summit](#)

October 23 @ 9:00 am - 2:00 pm EDT

[Election Fallout: How Should We Prepare?](#)

October 26 @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm EDT

[Zoom Conversation for Specialized Ministers](#)

October 27 @ 9:30 am - 11:00 am EDT

[Clergy Conversations via Zoom](#)

October 27 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm EDT

[Healthy Boundaries 101](#)

October 31 @ 8:45 am - 12:15 pm EDT

[Healthy Boundaries 101](#)

November 7 @ 8:45 am - 12:15 pm EST

[Discussion about Church Bylaws](#)

November 9 @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm EST

View the **full calendar** of events online: <https://www.secucc.org/events/>

Contact Us

Conference Minister: **Rev. Char Burch**; cburch@secucc.org

Assoc. Conf. Minister: **Rev. Heather Fosburgh**; hfosburgh@secucc.org

Generosity Coordinator: **Min. Carrole Moss**; cmoss@secucc.org

Director of Communications: **Don Harris**; dharris@secucc.org